—With Lord Dunsany

with Ledwidge in his inability to revise his verses. As to prose—

DUNSANY—I can't revise. My sentence is thought out before I write it. It is balanced as one would balance the shaft of a spear before throwing it. When I have penned it, it is done, is as good as I can do. I can't help what people think of my work. I know it has been done carefully, as well as I can do it. I have that satisfaction. My prose is carefully pondered and then done. There are certain things in my prose that I would bring out when men are talking of prose. *The Gods of Pegana* was done before I had any technique. People talk of Pater and style. If I were in competition there are certain selected things that I would bring out from *The Bride of the Man-Horse.*

CALLER—I've been pondering the Dunsany mythology. It has a method.

DUNSANY—In *The Gods of Pegana* I started out to account for the ocean and the moon. I don't know whether any one else has ever tried that before.

CALLER—The air of mythology and symbolism clings to the other work. One might find something ruggedly mythical even in *The Lost Silk Hat.*

DUNSANY—Don't make a mistake about that. There is no allegory in *The Lost Silk Hat,* though one can't prevent its being taken allegorically one way or another. The play is made by contrasting characters that are flint. I could write it because I have been both a man-about-town and a poet. And I can conceive of a great mistake being made about that play. One might make the poet long haired and fanatic, and one might make the man-about-town a fop. Instead of that they are real characters. As I say, I have been a man-about-town and known more or less familiarly in certain parts of London, and I know that if I had been seen without a hat my career might have been ruined. The man-about-town says with all the flinty determination of a soul conviction: *"I can't possibly be seen in the streets without a hat."* And the poet with an equal flinty conviction says: *"A hat is not one of the essential things of life. One couldn't write a lyric about a hat. That is the test of essential things."* No, no. There's no allegory there. It is life. Now and then I have written an allegory, but chiefly my plays are made by the clash of character. However, I had rather take my characters away from the city, away from the scene of ordinary life and put them in the mountain or in a desert, where there will be no confusion. Then if people say, That Is Life, I know I have told the truth. It seems to me that a play that is true to fancy is as true as one that is true to modern times, for fancy is quite as real as more solid things and every bit as necessary to man.

CALLER—Your ideal of art is fixed then, while your ideal of life is readjusting.

DUNSANY—When I was young I studied science—one of the sciences—geology. I had a theory then and I don't know that it can be proved or disproved. I had a theory that if one could know all the sciences—and no man ever has or can—and could stand at the point where all the sciences meet, then he would know the Creator. Now man always wants something that he hasn't. At 24, an age when some of the greatest poets have completed all their best lyric work, I had written nothing but a few inferior verses. I gave up science for art. I feel that art counts most of all. It is most rounded. It answers most the need we all have. It is the only thing that enduringly gives the mind and soul of man what he seeks. Politics and business offer certain things to man. They have an end, but they go very far roundabout in trying to satisfy men. One wants to feel as well as to know and do things. Why build a skyscraper of forty stories? Because somebody else has built one of twenty. That reason would not make me want to build a skyscraper. I feel that of all the activities possible to man architecture, music, poetry, painting and the drama give a man most, and life is so short that we all seek what will give us most. But America has a vision of art and ideals?

CALLER—It is often said that we are material with practical ends to serve chiefly.

DUNSANY—I cannot talk about America. I have only just arrived.

CALLER—But your plays were recognized here as early as anywhere.

DUNSANY—As early and more keenly.

CALLER—So before you came you must inevitably have had some preconception of America.

DUNSANY—Yes. I felt "America is alive." I said to myself, there is a country that is alive; there is a country that is not interested only in the art of men who are dead. I thought that it would be comfortable to be in America because I would surely meet some one who knew that I had written plays, while my own neighbors know me better for cricket and fox hunting. Many of them know me as a fox hunter and don't know that I've written plays. I'd rather be known as a writer of plays than as a fox hunter.

CALLER—It's more satisfying to bring out a play than it is to bring down big game.

DUNSANY—We all want something. In London we say, "Let's get drunk and go to the Derby." But some of us feel that that isn't enough. *(The telephone rings.* LORD DUNSANY *rises and holds the telephone in his hand, but leaves the receiver on the hook.)* Some people say, "Let us make a million dollars," and some of us feel that isn't enough. *(The telephone rings long, loud and clear.* LORD DUNSANY *looks at the telephone, startled. He is so startled that he sets the telephone back on the table and returns to his chair.)* Some of us feel that art alone matters, the best we can do in art, the best we can do in detecting life and putting it in form, bodying it forth in truth, in suggestion, in resemblance. *(The telephone rings very impatiently. The folding doors open.* LADY DUNSANY *enters and answers the telephone. She sees that the conversation is proceeding and there is the slightest bit of hesitation in her manner as she says into the telephone, "It won't be but a minute now.")* And some of us not only feel, but know that the artist deals directly in the goods that the politician and business man deal in indirectly if at all—things that satisfy the human spirit. Moods! We feel that a mood is a concrete and tangible thing, a thing of moment and great value to us all, a thing as lasting as marble.

CALLER *(rising)*—The telephone—your other callers—

DUNSANY—Ah, yes, the telephone. I fear I have kept someone waiting. I must come back to Irish politics.

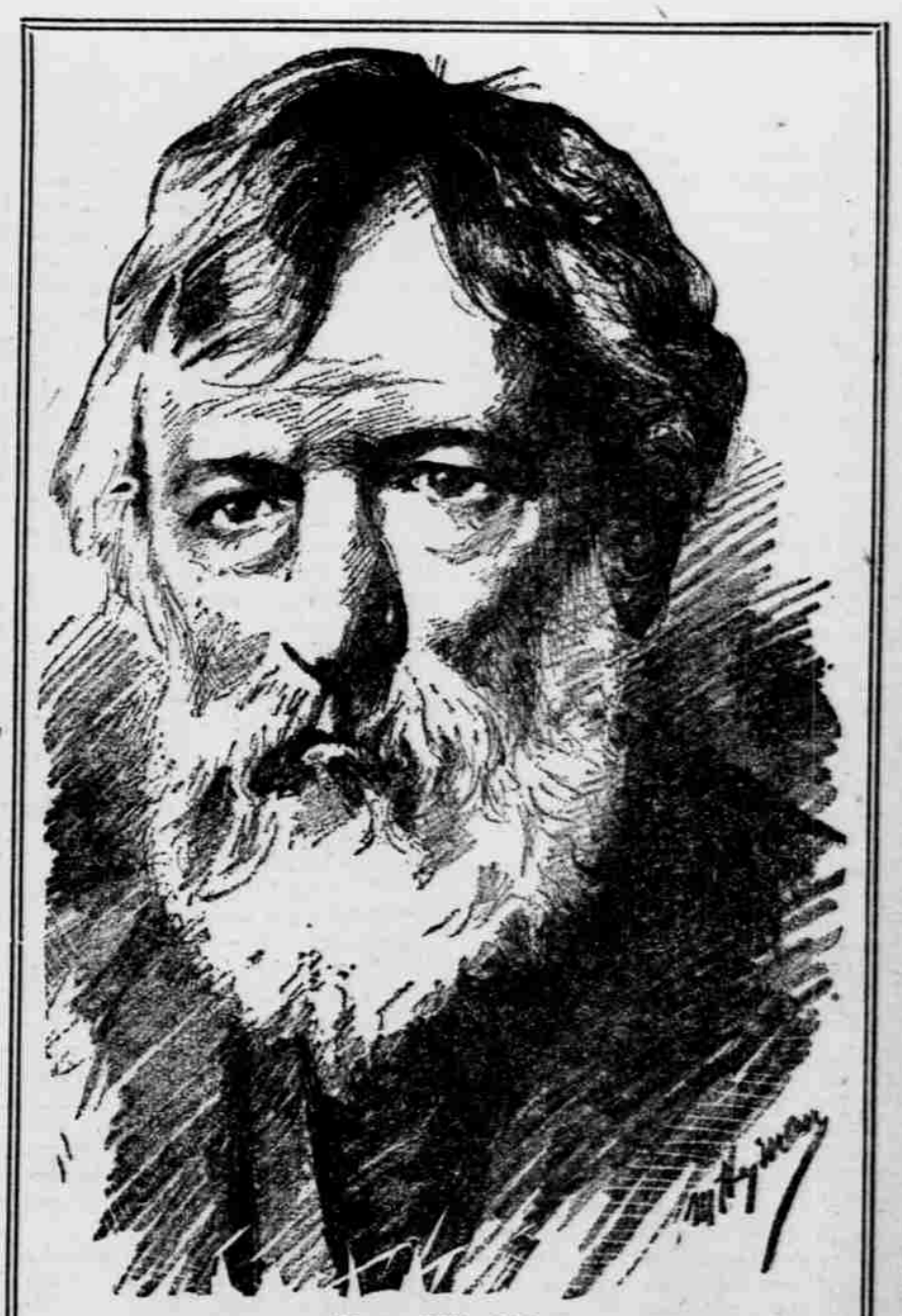
CALLER *(going)*—I mustn't stand in the way of Fame.

DUNSANY *(shaking hands)*—I'm glad you knew I was a writer of plays and not an Irish politician.

(CALLER *goes. When the door into the corridor is opened three reporters appear. They make a demonstration. While the door into* DUNSANY'S *sitting room is still open* A REPORTER'S *voice says: "You'd better scoot! Our appointment was set for half an hour ago!"* CALLER *scoots.)*

CURTAIN.

RANDALL PARRISH has some twenty-six published books to his credit, all of which are still in print and most of them, according to A. C. McClurg & Co., in active demand. Not many writers who have been before the public for a considerable time have such a record as this.



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Born Nov. 11, 1836. Editor of *Harper's Magazine,* 1869-1919. Died Oct. 7, 1919.